



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2005

No. 103

## House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
July 26, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KENNY MARCHANT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BEAUPREZ) for 5 minutes.

### REASONS TO SUPPORT THE CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight just a few of the reasons why I am in favor of the Central American Free Trade Agreement, known as CAFTA.

CAFTA is going to level the playing field for U.S. workers and farmers. Right now, the CAFTA countries have virtually open access to our U.S. mar-

ket. This agreement will give Americans the same free and fair access to their markets. The day CAFTA is signed, nearly \$1 billion a year in tariffs on U.S. goods goes away, making us immediately more competitive. Somewhere in this world, farmers will be producing the food and workers will be making the goods to meet the growing demand of the CAFTA nations. I want this demand to be met by American workers.

CAFTA will protect existing American jobs, allow us to compete fairly for more international business and strengthen our relationships with these six developing democracies.

Mr. Speaker, neighbors help each other, and CAFTA is a good neighbor treaty. I urge its adoption.

### HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS: A SOLUTION TO THE HIGH COST OF AMERICA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the high cost of America's health care system and also to highlight a solution to this problem that not only reduces the number of uninsured in the United States, but gives consumers the ability to rein in the high price of health care on their own terms.

Everyone in this Chamber and across the Nation knows that our Nation is in the midst of a health care crisis. The crisis not only affects patients, but our health care professionals as well. Rising health care costs have left nearly 45 million Americans without health insurance and thousands of small businesses struggling to cover their employees. In my home State of Pennsyl-

vania, over 50 percent of Pennsylvanians surveyed said their family has had difficulty paying the cost of health care or obtaining insurance for their dependents.

Since 2001, the cost of health insurance has risen 59 percent. In 2004, employers who offered health insurance benefits were paying an average of 11 percent more for health insurance premiums, making that year the fourth year of double-digit increases in premiums.

Last year, President Bush spoke of the need to create an ownership society in America. His idea was simple: Pass laws to enable our families to take greater ownership in their investments, their financial security and their future. The idea of an ownership society has already resulted in a booming housing market, impressive job growth and historic economic productivity.

I come to the floor today to say that the ownership society can also change health care as we know it today through the use of Health Savings Accounts. Designed as part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, Health Savings Accounts are tax-free accounts that empower consumers to take control over their own health care expenses.

The principle is simple: If a person has a health insurance plan with a high deductible of at least \$1,000 for an individual or \$2,000 for family coverage, that person can make pre-tax contributions to a savings account specifically designed to handle health insurance.

Health Savings Accounts are portable, interest-bearing financial instruments. Like a 401(k), contributions to HSAs are made with pre-tax income. Like an IRA, the account grows tax-free and can also be moved from job to job. There is no penalty for the removal of money from an HSA, and if an individual does not use any money from an HSA over the course of a year,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H6433